

HOW TO FIND

SS Copenhagen

The wreck of *Copenhagen* is located in 15-30 feet of water just outside the second reef on the Pompano Ledge, 3.6 miles south of Hillsboro Inlet and 3/4 of a mile off-shore Lauderdale-By-The-Sea at latitude 26° 12.349' N and longitude 80° 05.108' W. The site is adjacent to reef buoys #3 and #4. To avoid damage to the shipwreck or to coral and reef structure, please use mooring buoys. Remember to display a "divers down" flag when diving or snorkeling. A laminated underwater guide is available from local dive shops to orient divers on a self-guided tour of the preserve.

As with all other historical and archaeological sites on public uplands and submerged bottomlands, *Copenhagen* is protected by Florida laws prohibiting unauthorized disturbance, excavation, or removal of artifacts. Please help keep the site intact for others by not disturbing or harvesting marine life.

"Take only photos and leave only bubbles."



SS Copenhagen State Underwater Archaeological Preserve

Copenhagen came to rest along a rocky ledge, made up of large limestone blocks divided by cracks and crevices. After grounding, the ship listed to port; her starboard hull eventually collapsed onto the rocks while the port side slumped onto the deeper sand bottom. Over the years, much of the hull has fallen apart and settled over this uneven terrain. The lower hull is still articulated, especially in the stern. Coal from the ship's bunkers and cargo, camouflaged by marine growth, litters the bottom near the wreck.



Today, much of the ship's structure has become part of the reef, and the wreckage provides an ideal haven for all kinds of marine life. Hard and soft corals and multicolored sponges thrive on the steel hull plates. Juvenile reef fish and tropicals dart in and out of the twisted structure, which serves as a sheltered nursery. Seafans sway in the gentle surge along the length of the ship. The pillow block that supported the propeller shaft, shown here, is a focal point for curious parrot fish. Moray eels hide in cracks in the reef and wreck. Empty beds for the ship's two boilers today house a population of damsel fish and sergeant majors energetically defending their niche in the sunken wreck.



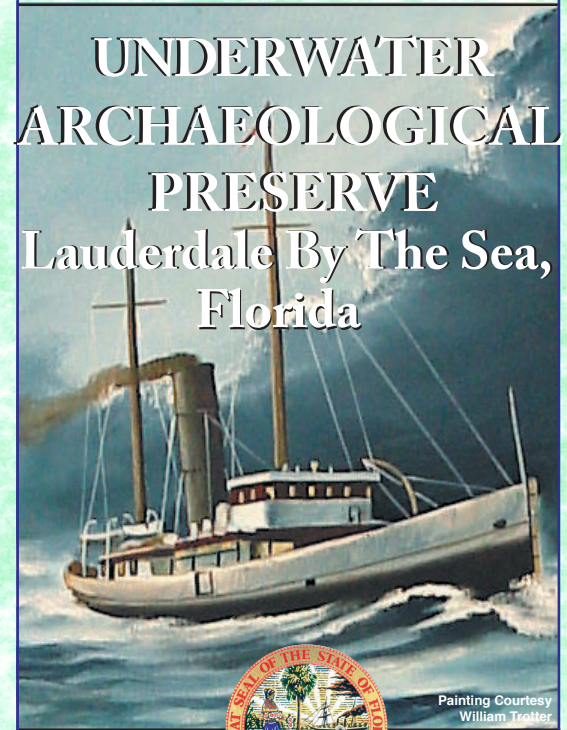
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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Historical Resources
Bureau of Archaeological Research
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

SS Copenhagen

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE Lauderdale By The Sea, Florida



Governor of Florida

Secretary of State

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Bureau of Archaeological Research

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Division of State Lands

BROWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
COUNCIL, INC.



COPENHAGEN CLAN

SS Copenhagen

The single screw steamer *Copenhagen* was built in Sunderland, England, and was launched on February 22, 1898. She was registered at Glasgow, Scotland, and belonged to the Glasgow Shipowners Company, Ltd. The steel-hulled ship was rated at 3,279 tons and was 325 feet in length and 47 feet in beam, with 25.6 feet depth of hold. *Copenhagen* was powered by three triple expansion steam engines, and also carried schooner rigging to take advantage of fair winds and to provide a means of propulsion in case the steam engines failed.

Her last voyage began on May 20, 1900, out of Philadelphia, bound for Havana with 4,940 tons of coal. Captain William S. Jones was in command of the ship and a crew of 26 men. Six days later, traveling south off the Florida coast, the ship approached Jupiter Lighthouse at 0220 hours and the captain ordered the course altered to SSE, reckoning their position to be one and three-quarter miles offshore. The vessel was steaming at about eight knots, her full speed. At 0420 Capt. Jones retired and left the chief officer in charge with instructions to stay one and one-half miles from shore. As morning dawned over a calm sea, the chief calculated the ship's position at two miles from shore. Capt. Jones returned on deck at 0800; reckoning the ship to be two and one-half to three miles off-shore, he steered SSW to avoid the strong northerly Gulf Stream current. At approximately 0850, *Copenhagen* suddenly crashed into a reef three-quarters of a mile off present-day



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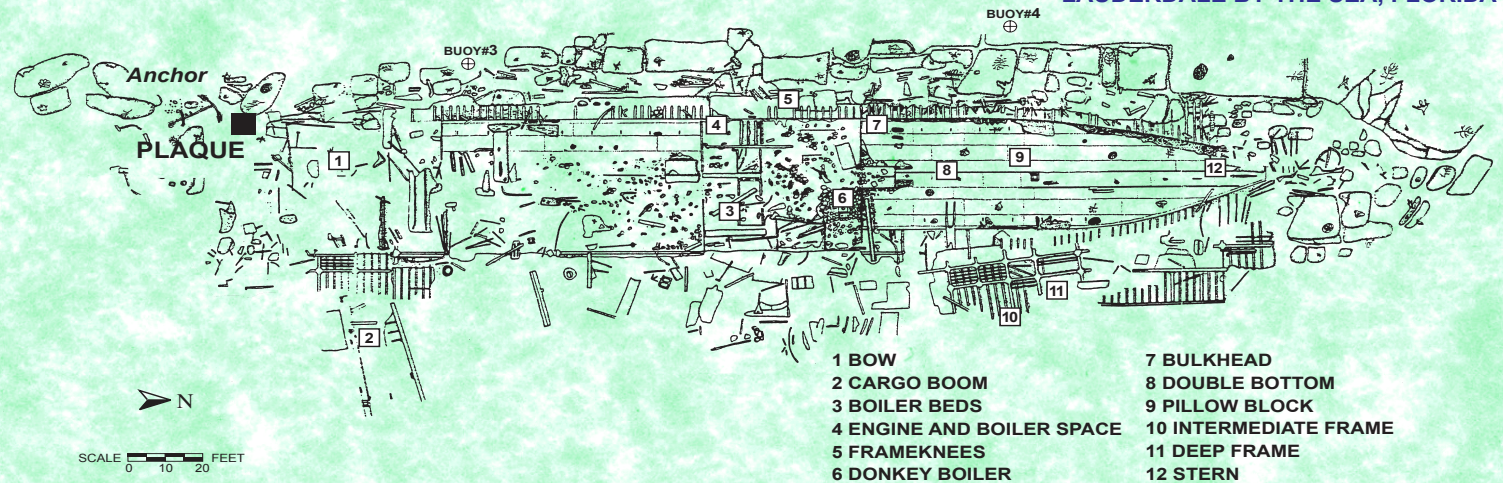
The ship's engines were stopped, then reversed, but to no avail. A large kedge anchor was deployed from the port side of the stranded vessel and hove taught but the ship would not budge. Word came from below decks that the number one ballast tank and the forepeak were taking on water. At 1100 hours, Capt. Jones went ashore to telegraph Key West for assistance. The crew was put to work unloading the cargo of coal.

Two days later, a salvage steamer arrived to free the stricken steamship. More hands from shore were employed to unload the cargo, and three pumps were put in operation. Another anchor was deployed from the port quarter in a vain attempt to pull her off the reef. Merritt and Chapman Wrecking Company, whose local agent Ralph M. Monroe had wired news of the accident to New York, also sent salvage vessels to the scene. Although the ship's cargo was completely unloaded, *Copenhagen* was finally abandoned as a total wreck. The vessel was valued at \$250,000 and her cargo at \$12,500. A Board of Inquiry found Capt. Jones to be at fault for improper navigation, because he had not employed a sounding lead to determine the depth of water under the ship. Because of his previous outstanding record, however, his master's certificate was not revoked.

Like many steamships of the late 19th century, *Copenhagen* was built with a double bottom of separate inner and outer hulls. The construction of steamships with double bottoms had be-

Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research

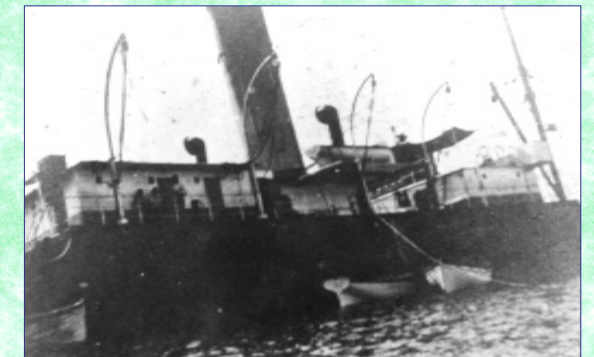
SS COPENHAGEN
LAUDERDALE BY THE SEA, FLORIDA



come routine in England by the 1890s. In addition to containing adjustable water ballast tanks to offset various cargo conditions, double bottoms afforded a safety measure against minor groundings. In the case of *Copenhagen*, the ship's double bottom apparently did not prevent initial flooding of the hull; grounding at full speed on a shallow rocky ledge may have sealed her fate.

The wreck of *Copenhagen* remained visible above the water for some time. As the ship's remains gradually became totally submerged, her identity was forgotten. Skin and scuba divers eventually rediscovered the site as a colorful haven for fish and corals. Research by the Marine Archaeological Council of Broward County reestablished the site's identity and history. Nominated by a local dive boat

captain, the wreck of *Copenhagen* became Florida's fifth Underwater Archaeological Preserve in 1994 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. In 2000, the bow section of *Copenhagen*, missing from the main area of wreckage, was identified one-half mile to the south and recorded by members of Vone Research Inc., a local avocational archaeology team, and the Marine Archaeological Council.



Courtesy St. Augustine Historical Society